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KAAMYA KARTHIKEYAN YOUNGEST INDIAN TO SCALE MOUNT EVEREST

The 16-year-old mountaineer is also the second youngest girl in the world to climb Mt Everest from the Nepal side, the Western Naval Command said

ACCOMPANIED BY NAVAL COMMANDER FATHER

Kaamya was accompanied by her father, Commander S Karthikeyan of the Indian Navy, during her journey to the world's highest peak. The duo, along with their team, reached Nepal's capital Kathmandu on April 6. After acclimatisation and several days of planning, her summit climb began on May 16 from the Everest Base Camp. She and her father reached the summit at 8,848 metres on May 20

ON A MISSION TO CONQUER THE SEVEN PEAKS

- With the Everest climb, Kaamya has now completed six milestones in her mission to summit the highest peak of all seven continents. She is aiming to climb Mt Vinson Massif in Antarctica this December
- Her Himalayan journey started at the age of seven with a high-altitude trek to Uttarakhand's Chandrashila peak in 2015

Class XII

STUDENT OF NAVY CHILDREN SCHOOL, MUMBAI

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

MEA 'PROCESSING' REQUEST TO CANCEL PRAJWAL'S PASSPORT

Once the passport is revoked, he will not be able to fly through the normal channels

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ New Delhi / Bengaluru

LEGAL QUESTION

Prajwal travelled to Germany on his diplomatic passport without political clearance, which is a violation of rules. According to the MEA, it can revoke the passport only if a court orders it to do so

THE Ministry of External Affairs said on Thursday that it has received a request from the Karnataka government to revoke the diplomatic passport of absconding Hassan MP Prajwal Revanna, who is the prime accused in multiple cases of sexual abuse.

"A request made by the Karnataka government to cancel Prajwal's passport is being processed under the provisions of the Passports Act of 1967," said an official.

The MEA's reaction came after Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah shot off a second letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi urging him to do the needful to cancel Prajwal's diplomatic passport. The Karnataka CM had written to Modi on May 1 as well.

The 33-year-old grandson of JDS supremo and former prime minister HD Deve Gowda is reportedly holed up in Germany after slipping out of India on April 26 using his diplomatic passport.

Once the passport is revoked, he will not be able to fly through the normal channels. If he tries to use the revoked passport, he will be held and deported. "If he wants to come back, he will have to approach the nearest Indian embassy for a travel document that would enable him to return to India," said an official.

MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said according to the provisions of the Passports Act of 1967, passports can only be revoked on the directions of a court.

An arrest warrant was issued against Prajwal on Saturday. Earlier, the SIT issued a look out notice, while Interpol issued a "Blue Corner Notice" seeking information on the whereabouts of the MP in response to a request by the SIT.

Prajwal misused his diplomatic privileges: CM

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah urged the Centre to cancel the diplomatic passport of Hassan MP Prajwal Revanna, who is absconding after the sex scandal came to light. In his second letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the CM said Prajwal misused his diplomatic privileges to flee the country and escape criminal proceedings | P4

Gowda asks grandson to surrender

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

FORMER PM and JDS supremo HD Deve Gowda on Thursday warned his grandson and Hassan MP Prajwal Revanna, who is wanted in the alleged sexual abuse cases, to return to India immediately and surrender before the Special Investigation Team (SIT).

"It is of utmost importance to me to regain the people's trust. They have stood by me for over 60 years of my political life and am deeply indebted to them. As long as I am alive, I will never let them down," he posted on 'X', tagging Prajwal.

Prajwal reportedly fled to Germany on April 26 after casting his vote in the Lok Sabha elections.

Based on the state women's commission's recommendations, the Congress government set up the SIT to probe the alleged sexual abuse cases against Prajwal and others.

"At this juncture, I can do only one thing. I can issue a stern warning to Prajwal and ask him to return from wherever he is and surrender before the police. He should subject himself to the legal process. This is not an appeal that I am making, it is a warning," Gowda said.

CONTINUED ON: P4

7 more Maoists shot dead in Chhattisgarh

EJAZ KAISER @ Raipur

SECURITY forces on Thursday shot dead seven armed Maoists in their core stronghold area along the forested terrain of inter-district border of Narayanpur-Bijapur in south Chhattisgarh.

The series of encounters against the Left-wing extremists is part of the strategy to free the conflict-ridden Bastar zone from the influence of the banned CPI (Maoist).

The bodies of seven Maoists in uniform were recovered from the encounter site, officials said. Besides, five weapons and items of daily use were also seized.

In all, 115 Maoists have been eliminated by the security forces since December, when aggressive operations were launched across Bastar.

"Security personnel belonging to the District Reserve Guards from three districts — Narayanpur, Dantewada and Jagdalpur — along with Bastar Fighters and the Special Task Force launched an operation based on intelligence inputs. The Maoists opened fire and the forces swiftly retaliated from different directions after taking positions atop the hilly terrain. Intermittent firing still continues. Full details will be available after the forces return to their respective camps," the police in Bastar said.

Unconfirmed reports claimed that several Maoists sustained injuries in the gunfight. This is the second major success achieved by the forces in Bijapur this month. On May 10, the forces killed 12 Maoists at Pedia village of Gangapur area in Bijapur.

Security forces had specific inputs about the presence of Maoists from Platoon number 16 and Indravati Area Committee in the encounter area, which is normally considered a safe haven for the Maoists. The operation was meticulously planned to corner the rebels from different directions so as to block their exit.

Union home minister Amit Shah had recently said the Maoist problem would be eliminated within the next two to three years.

STRATEGIC SHIFT IN TACTICS

Every summer between March and June, Maoists normally launch most of their attacks against the forces. For the first time, security forces have turned the tables and are attacking the Maoists in summer to take the psychological advantage over the rebels

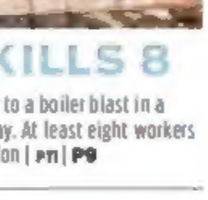
FACTORY BLAST KILLS 8

Firefighters try to extinguish a fire that broke out due to a boiler blast in a chemicals factory at Dombivli in Thane district on Thursday. At least eight workers died and 60 others were injured in the explosion | PTI | P9

EXPRESS READ

Sensex, Nifty see record highs

New Delhi: Demolishing general election 2024 outcome-related jitters, India's equity market made stellar gains on Thursday. The benchmark indexes -- BSE Sensex and NSE Nifty -- closed the session with a gain of more than 1.6% each after hitting fresh peak levels | P13



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40 PAGES, INCLUDING 24 OF INDULGE (TABLOID)

Telugu actor Hema, 85 others test +ve for drugs

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

EIGHTY-six people, including Telugu actor **Hema**, have tested positive for doing drugs at a rave party in a farmhouse near Electronics City on Sunday night.

Police said of the 73 blood samples of men, 59 tested positive, and of the 30 samples of women, 27 tested positive for drugs.

Sources said actors Hema and Aashi Roy, and supporting actor Chiranjivi were at the rave party and their blood samples tested positive. The police will soon summon all those who have tested positive for questioning.

Hema had posted a video on social media claiming that she did not attend the rave party and that she was in Hyderabad. A source said Hema made the video at the farmhouse in Bengaluru and posted it on social media. Aashi Roy too posted a similar video.

DCP (Crime) Srinivas Gowda said all 86 partygoers will be questioned over the drugs they received at the farmhouse. Investigations are on to find out who had funded the party and supplied drugs. The police are also questioning those arrested in this case. The Central Crime Branch (CCB) is investigating the case which was earlier transferred to Hebbagodi police.

The anti-narcotic wing of the CCB raided the farmhouse on Monday morning and arrested five people, including Vasu L, 35, from Andhra Pradesh, who had allegedly organised the "sunrise to sunset victory" party to celebrate his birthday. P5

Poll-bound Nandigram on edge as BJP worker killed

SULAGNA SENGUPTA @ Kolkata

NANDIGRAM in West Bengal's Tamluk Lok Sabha constituency was on the boil days ahead of the sixth phase of voting there on May 25 after a female BJP worker was killed and several others suffered injuries in an attack by a group of unknown persons.

The BJP workers, alleging that the Trinamool Congress-backed criminals were responsible for the death of Rathibala Ari, blocked roads and torched shops. Police were deployed in large numbers to quell the unrest. There were reports of lathicharge in the Sonachura area of Nandigram. Personnel from the paramilitary Central Armed Police Force were also deployed.

The local BJP leadership said party supporters periodically conduct night patrolling in the Sonachura area during elections. In the wee hours of Thursday, when a patrol was going on, a group of men came in motorcycles and attacked the patrolling team with sharp weapons, local BJP leader Meghnad Pal said. "In that attack, Rotibala was killed. We strongly believe these unknown miscreants were linked to Trinamool Congress," Pal said. The incident comes days after Mamata vowed to take revenge for her 2021 Assembly elections defeat in Nandigram.

The Election Commission has sought a report from district administration.

Uttara Kannada sees 108 monkey fever cases

SUBHASH CHANDRA NS
@ Siddapur (Uttara Kannada)

UTTARA Kannada district has recorded 108 cases of monkey fever or Kyasanur Forest Disease (KFD) so far this year.

According to the health department, the number of cases started increasing after 2019. The district recorded 50 cases that year. "We have the highest number of cases this year after 2019. We have initiated measures to contain the disease from spreading in the district," Dr Neeraj, district health officer, said.

Siddapur alone has recorded 100 cases. The remaining eight cases have been detected in Joida, Sirsi and Ankola. Nine people, including two children aged five and nine, have died so far this year. Interestingly, all deaths have been reported from Siddapur taluk. "The children succumbed to the disease because of poor immunity. The others, mostly senior citizens, who succumbed to the disease, lost their immunity due to comorbidities," Dr Neeraj said. P5

Mehbooba battling for honour, PDP redemption on her home turf

FAYAZ WANI @ Srinagar

FORMER Jammu and Kashmir chief minister and Peoples Democratic Party president Mehbooba Mufti, 65, is facing the toughest of electoral battle in her political career spanning over three decades.

She is contesting from the newly carved out Anantnag-Rajouri Lok Sabha seat, which goes to the polls on May 25. It's a must-win duel for her to enhance her political stature and revive the fortunes of her party ahead of the Assembly polls due before September this year. The stakes are very high since she is contesting on her home turf, which once was a bastion of the Muftis and the PDP.

SHOWTIME FOR GLADIATORS

The PDP has been weakened considerably by desertions since the fall of its coalition government with the BJP in June 2018. Mehbooba's popularity dived when her party forged an alliance with the BJP in 2014 after contesting as rivals. Her handling of the 2016 unrest in the Valley, too, drew widespread criticism.

Mehbooba is pitted against the National Conference's (NC) Mian Altaf and Apni Party's Zafar Manhas. She is campaigning extensively in both the border districts of Poonch and Rajouri as well as Anantnag, Kulgam and Shopian in south Kashmir.

While Mehbooba is fighting on her own, Altaf's NC is supported by the Congress, and Manhas is banking on the tacit support of the BJP.

To shake off the taint of aligning with the BJP, Mehbooba took a hard line against the Centre's decision to read down Article 370 of the Constitution. The dominant sentiment in the Valley is still in favour of restoring Article 370, which gave the erstwhile J&K state special status.

In the newly carved out Anantnag-Rajouri constituency, Mehbooba is banking on her traditional support base in Anantnag, Kulgam and Shopan districts while also reaching out to the Gujjars, Bakerwals and especially the Pahari community (which was recently granted Scheduled Tribe status) in Poonch and Rajouri.

Poonch and Rajouri were added to the erstwhile Anantnag parliamentary constituency after the delimitation exercise. Both Poonch and Rajouri districts have sizable populations of Gujjars, Bakerwals and Paharis. It has led to parties realigning their strategies. The NC's Altaf is a prominent Gujjar leader in Poonch and Rajouri districts while Manhas is a Pahari leader.

NC vice president Omar Abdullah snubbing the PDF by ruling out any alliance with it could go in her favour if the PDP can channelise the slight to drum up support and fire up the cadre.

ILLUSTRATION: MANOJ PARIKAR

Mehbooba Mufti, Mian Altaf and Zafar Manhas